DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

PARISH OF ORLEANS

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

FEBRUARY 5, 1967

NAME: FESTUS J. BROWN

RESIDING AT: 1809 ROBERT ST., NEW ORLEANS, LA.

I met Mr. Banister the first time when he was the speaker at an American Legion luncheon. After he spoke at the luncheon everyone was introduced to him. The next occasion where I met him was during the hearings on subversive activities in the area conducted by congressional committees from Washington and it was during, I'm pretty sure it was the final hearing that was held, when he recognized me and spoke to me. He inquired if I was still active in American Legion, Americanism and counter-subversive activities. I was Chairman of the First District Americanism Committee at the time that I first met him and at the subsequent time and so naturally I answered him in the affirmative that I was still interested. At that time, he offered to be of any assistance to our committee in this connection and, if we felt he could be of any help to us, to please call on him -- that he had been in his previous F.B.I. assignment, active in helping American Legion people in this type of work (meaning Americanism and counter-subversive work). It's my understanding that he was still connected with the Police Department during the time hearing but I don't know if he still was during the subsequent hearing. My first occasion to call on Mr. Banister for advice and assistance was at his private offices in the Dolhonde building. The purpose was to obtain advice or assistance [illegible] understanding Communist techniques in [illegible] subversive activity.

I made other visits to secure similar assistance from Mr. Banister when he was located on Lafayette St. across from the Old Post Office Bldg. On at least two occasions he spoke to our committee concerning the world communist conspiracy, its methods, technique and strategy, both on a national basis and a world-wide basis. He served as our special adviser to the American Legion State Committee on Un-American Activities of which I was chairman. Mr. Banister had been similarly associated with the Legion work in this field in other areas of the nation where he was serving as special agent in charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. During this association with Mr. Banister, he was most cordial and helpful. He seemed always anxious to assist us. He was always courteous and dignified.

Q - Mr. Brown, I'll show you seven pictures of men. Would you tell me if you recognize any of these pictures?
A - I recognize the picture of Mr. Banister. I do not recognize any of the others positively, but there is one which has a resemblance to Oswald.
Q - Mr. Brown, at any time during your association with Mr. Banister, have you ever seen Oswald in the company of Mr. Banister at his office or elsewhere?
A - No sir, I have not.
Q - Mr. Brown, the names David Ferrie, Jack Martin, Vernon Gerdes -- do these names mean anything to you?
A - The only name that has a ring that seems familiar is the name, Jack Martin. It strikes me that I have heard that name before, but I don't remember the connection.
Q - Can you give me an estimate on the amount of time that you knew Mr. Banister -- a year or two years, whatever it may be?
A - I would say approximately one year.

Q - During these two years, have you ever seen Cuban type persons in the company of Mr. Banister?

A - No sir, I have not.

Q - Did Mr. Banister ever disclose to you any type of Communist cases or other cases that he was working on during your association with him?

A - No sir. We never discussed anything concerning any of his investigations and, of course, I never thought it proper to ask him.

Q - Mr. Brown, do you know any of the people that were employed by Mr. Banister?

A - Yes, I do. Mrs. Delphine Roberts was working in his office on Lafayette St. A Mrs. Mary Helen Bringel also worked there for a period prior to his death. I did not know anyone working with him while in the Balter Building, and I do not remember the names of the two ladies who first worked at the Lafayette St. office. Mrs. Bringel lives on Joseph St. and I do not know where Delphine Roberts lives.

Q - Did you ever have an occasion to meet any male employees of Mr. Banister?

A - Yes. At the Lafayette St. address he did introduce me to two gentlemen during one of my visits. It was a brief introduction and I do not remember their names, and I cannot seem to recall clearly how they looked. I don't know whether I would be able to identify them if I were to see them again.

Q - Mr. Brown, is there anything other than what you have told me that you can remember while you were associated with Mr. Banister?

A - No sir, I can't think of anything that would be of material value in addition to what I have already said, except that a [illegible], also knew Mr. Banister [illegible] after

his retirement.

Q - Does the above statement reflect what you believe to be true and correct and to the best of your knowledge?

A - Yes sir, it does.

Q - Mr. Brown, do you give this statement of your own free will?

A - Yes, I do.

FESTUS J. BROWN

KENT A. SIMMS, Witness

This statement was typed in the office of the District Attorney on February 5, 1967.

/af

Follow Up +

Mrs. Lawrence McNally

Mary Helen Brunfil